



Into-My-Void · 4d
The Skeptic Scientist

Ummm... It seems we are getting a little lost in all the argumentation... So let's go back to the origin of this argument before we keep going. I just want to make sure I'm understanding both of our positions correctly. I'm not trying to debate this part, just to confirm we're on the same page about what we each mean.

My position (as I see it):

- Forcing someone to remain pregnant *against their will* is a form of *coercion*, since it compels them to continue a biological process using their body for another being.
- Abortion is a medical procedure that can be ethically justified, especially because "murder" implies unlawful and malicious killing, which doesn't apply to medical care done with the intent to help the patient.
- The ethical core for me is bodily autonomy: no person should be legally obligated to sustain another life with their body, regardless of potential moral or emotional views on the fetus.

Your position (as I understand it):

- You see the fetus as having a right to life that imposes a moral obligation on others not to kill it.
- You believe that "obligation" is distinct from "force," even though enforcing that obligation may sometimes involve force (e.g., through laws).
- From your view, abortion ends the life of a human being, so laws restricting abortion *are not coercing pregnancy* but rather *enforcing the obligation to protect that life*.
- You regard "murder" in a moral sense as the *intentional killing of a human* regardless of its legality.
- You accept that the obligation of keeping the foetus alive may burden the pregnant person but believe that burden doesn't cancel the moral duty involved.

Does that sound like an accurate summary of both of our perspectives so far? I just want to make sure I'm understanding and representing your position exactly as you mean it before going further. Feel free to do the same with your own view of both our position so I can properly understand your position before we keep going.

... 21 ↩️ ⬆️ 2 ⬇️



Pro Life Moderator · 4d
Pro Life Moderator

Seems about right.

... ↩️ ⬆️ 1 ⬇️



Into-My-Void · 4d
The Skeptic Scientist

Great, thank you for confirming. Now that we're clear on our respective frameworks, I'd like to examine how your position functions logically, not to debate morality yet, but to test internal consistency.

From what you said, the moral duty not to kill stems from the fetus's right to life. That right, in turn, depends on recognizing the fetus as a "person." Would that be fair to say?

If so, I'd like to understand *how* that personhood is established, and whether it can be *demonstrated* without *presupposing* it. In ethics and law, personhood usually implies both moral agency and autonomy. But, in your view, it seems to apply to any human organism regardless of consciousness, agency, or dependency.

So my question is: --> What criterion makes a fetus a "person" in your framework, and how is that criterion justified without first assuming that abortion is wrong?

I'm asking this carefully because I'm trying to see whether the moral conclusion (that abortion is wrong) logically follows from your premises. Because, if the premise already is in the conclusion, then the argument isn't actually proving anything, it's

2) So my question is: --> What criterion makes a fetus a "person" in your framework, and how is that criterion justified without first assuming that abortion is wrong?

I'm asking this carefully because I'm trying to see whether the moral conclusion (that abortion is wrong) logically follows from your premises. Because, if the premise already is in the conclusion, then the argument isn't actually proving anything, it's restating belief as premise. Do you understand?

... 28 ↩️ ⬆️ 1 ⬇️



• 4d

Pro Life Moderator Top 1% Commenter

From what you said, the moral duty not to kill stems from the fetus's right to life. That right, in turn, depends on recognizing the fetus as a "person." Would that be fair to say?

I disagree with the notion that the unborn human needs to be recognized as a person before they have human rights.

All that is required to have human rights is to be a human which even a one minute-old human zygote qualifies for.

Consequently, considering personhood when humanity would be sufficient introduces unnecessary complexity to the discussion and I tend to discard the concept entirely, except when discussing it with those people who presuppose that the personhood abstraction is necessary.

... ↩️ ⬆️ 1 ⬇️



Into-My-Void • 4d

The Skeptic Scientist

Thanks for clarifying: that helps a lot!

So, if I understand correctly, your position is that *biological humanity alone* is sufficient to confer moral rights, and that "personhood" adds unnecessary philosophical baggage. **In other words, the moment an organism is genetically human (even as a zygote), it automatically acquires the same right to life as any born human being.**

That's an interesting framework, but I want to make sure I'm understanding the implications correctly:

- Under that model, the *presence of human DNA* (not consciousness, viability, or sentience) is what defines moral worth.
- Therefore, entities like brain-dead patients or unimplanted embryos would also qualify as full rights-bearers, since they're genetically human.

Is that an accurate reflection of your view? I just want to be certain before exploring how that fits with how we typically define "human rights" philosophically (since those are usually grounded in sentience, agency, or self-awareness).

... 23 ↩️ ⬆️ 1 ⬇️



• 4d

Pro Life Moderator Top 1% Commenter

Under that model, the presence of human DNA (not consciousness, viability, or sentience) is what defines moral worth.

I do not believe that "worth" or value are components of this discussion. Human rights are rights that exist regardless of the value of the human, they are derived from the biological context of humans and the needs of human society.

A human could lack all moral worth and still have human rights.

A human need not be superior in any way to any other human or even any other species for other humans to have the obligation to uphold their human

③ A human need not be superior in any way to any other human or even any other species for other humans to have the obligation to uphold their human rights.

We see this in the progressive notion that all humans irrespective of age, gender, ability, or even perceived social value have human rights. The rights are bedrock obligations that cannot be alienated from a human by any action they may take or status they may achieve or lose.

If the worst person who ever lived was placed in front of us, we would still insist that they have human rights even if we concluded that there was some evidence that they had even a negative social value (assuming that is possible) as an individual.

Also, while merely having human DNA is a necessary requirement for being a human, it is not a sufficient one. What is required is that human genome be implemented in a living organism.

Therefore, entities like brain-dead patients or unimplanted embryos would also qualify as full rights-bearers, since they're genetically human.

As stated above, this is not the case for the brain-dead patient, since simply holding human DNA is necessary, but not sufficient for being a human. The DNA must be implemented in a living organism. A brain-dead patient is no longer considered living as their "hardware" is no longer capable of running the program successfully.

On the other hand, an unimplanted frozen embryo would have human rights. While they are in suspension, they are technically still alive, and capable of resuming "normal human operation" for lack of a better phrase. This means they would retain their human rights.

... ↩ ⬆ 1 ⬇



Into-My-Void · 4d
The Skeptic Scientist

Thank you for clarifying. I want to make sure I'm fully and accurately understanding your position before we move forward.

From what you've explained so far, your framework appears to rest on these key points:

- 1. Human rights do not depend on personhood, consciousness, or moral worth.** A being doesn't need to be self-aware, sentient, or capable of moral action to possess human rights.
- 2. Human rights arise from the biological fact of being a living human organism.** Possessing a human genome implemented in a living system (not just DNA, but a functioning organism) is both necessary and sufficient for having human rights.
- 3. Moral or social "value" is irrelevant.** Even a human who contributes nothing to society (or who has negative moral or social worth) still retains the same rights simply for being human and alive.
- 4. Brain-dead humans are excluded because they are no longer biologically living organisms;** their "hardware" no longer sustains life, so they are no longer human in the operative sense of your framework.
- 5. Frozen embryos are included** because, although dormant, they are still biologically alive and capable of resuming human development, so they retain full human rights.
- 6. Human rights are objective and universal, derived from the biological context of humanity** and the needs of human society, not from subjective notions of worth or moral capacity.

Is this an accurate representation of your position as you see it? I want to

6. Human rights are objective and universal, derived from the biological context of humanity and the needs of human society, not from subjective notions of worth or moral capacity.

Is this an accurate representation of your position as you see it? I want to ensure I'm arguing from your actual premises rather than a misinterpretation.

... 21 ↩️ 🔼 1 🔽



• 4d

Pro Life Moderator 🗨️ Top 1% Commenter

Mostly correct. However, the following needs elaboration.

Human rights are objective and universal

This is not quite what I would say. While human rights are derived from what the human community feels are needs based on their biological context, they are not necessarily objectively good in a universal sense.

If we assume another intelligent species with different needs and context, we can believe that species might have their own species rights system which is specific to them. That set of rights might differ from human rights and in some cases, they might allow actions under their rights system which we might consider atrocities if humans did them to other humans.

Yes, in the sense that human rights should be able to be derived from observations of human needs and behavior, human rights can be objectively investigated when limited to humans.

However, they are not universal outside of human interactions with other humans.

In short, human rights exist in a morally relative world where their "objectivity" or "absolutism" is based on how well they fit the needs and condition of being human.

... ↩️ 🔼 0 🔽



Into-My-Void • 4d

The Skeptic Scientist

Thank you for the clarification, that helps narrow the framework.

Let me restate it to ensure I've understood your position correctly:

1. Human rights originate within the human community. They are social constructs derived from the biological realities and needs of human beings, not divine or metaphysical truths.

2. They are objective only within the human context. We can study them empirically (through human biology and behavior), but they are not universal across species or cosmic in scope.

3. They exist in a morally relative world. Human rights are binding among humans because they fit the conditions of being human, but they are not necessarily absolute moral truths in a universal sense.

4. In other words: Human rights are species-specific moral contracts grounded in shared biology and social necessity: objectively definable for humans, but not universally or metaphysically absolute.

Would that be an accurate restatement of your view?

(Hope you don't mind all the numérotation, I just really like organizing things that way...)

... 63 ↩️ 🔼 1 🔽



• 4d

Pro Life Moderator 🗨️ Top 1% Commenter

5



Pro Life Moderator · 4d
Top 1% Commenter

I'd say we're close enough to at least get started.

... ↩ ↑ 1 ↓



Into-My-Void · 4d
The Skeptic Scientist

Excellent, thank you. Since we're now working from your framework, I'd like to explore its implications carefully.

If human rights arise from the human community's understanding of its biological context and social needs, then:

- 1. Rights are defined and recognized by human society itself**, rather than discovered in nature as immutable truths.
- 2. They evolve as our understanding** of human biology and social organization evolves.
- 3. Their application is negotiated through collective consensus**, political, ethical, and legal.

These points follow directly from the framework you outlined earlier, in which:

- Human rights do not depend on personhood, consciousness, or moral worth,
- They are grounded in the biological reality of being a living human organism,
- And they exist as species-specific moral contracts within a human context.

Would you agree this accurately captures the logical extension of your position before I keep going?

... ⌚ 23 ↩ ↑ 1 ↓



Pro Life Moderator · 4d
Top 1% Commenter

Disagree on the last two points.

I believe rights can be discovered by humans, and so can seem to change as we investigate further, but what is happening is a better understanding of what already exists.

Like Columbus "discovering" the New World, except the New World was already there and already had people living on it.

The act of discovery did not cause the New World to change, it merely informed the Old World that the New World was there.

We do not negotiate human rights, we merely try to do a better job of recognizing them through observation and study.

... ↩ ↑ 1 ↓



Into-My-Void · 4d
The Skeptic Scientist

Ummm... that's an important clarification.

If I understand correctly, you now see human rights not as social constructs created by humans, but as objective realities that exist independently of human recognition: something we can "discover," like a natural law.

That seems like a significant shift from what you described earlier, when you said human rights "exist in a morally relative world," and that their objectivity or absolutism "is based on how well they fit the needs and condition of being human."

6

That seems like a significant shift from what you described earlier, when you said human rights "exist in a morally relative world," and that their objectivity or absolutism "is based on how well they fit the needs and condition of being human."

So, before I continue, could you confirm this distinction?

Are you now asserting that human rights exist as objective moral facts (independent of human perception) rather than as moral frameworks derived from biological and social necessity?

I just want to be precise, because whether rights are *discovered* or *constructed* has **very different implications** for how we evaluate moral questions like abortion.

... ⌚ 25 ↶ 🔼 1 ↵



Into-My-Void · 3d
The Skeptic Scientist

I've had time to think since yesterday and I think intellectual honesty is very important. So, for clarification, here's what I'm trying to do by asking all these questions.

My goal isn't to trap or debate you emotionally: it's to **map your logical framework so that I can understand it well enough to argue within it**. That way, our discussion stays consistent and productive.

To illustrate what I mean, here's *my* own logical framework:

I hold to moral relativism. That means I don't believe in absolute moral truths that exist independently of human minds: no universal moral laws to "discover," like gravity or thermodynamics. For me, **moral concepts are human inventions**, created by societies to regulate behavior and promote coexistence. Because humans differ in culture, biology, and circumstance, it seems highly improbable that all humans could ever agree on one immutable moral system.

So, if moral relativism is true, certain arguments are automatically off the table: for example, religious dogma or appeals to "objective morality". Using those would contradict my own framework, so I simply don't.

That leaves me with the need to define a minimal ethical foundation: something broad enough that most people could agree on, even without believing in absolute morality. For me, those two core principles are:

1. Maximization of freedom (autonomy and agency): every individual human should have as much personal agency and autonomy as possible, which also mean as much control as possible over their own life and body.

2. Minimization of suffering: societies should prioritize reducing unnecessary suffering for all sentient beings.

These two principles must balance each other: Freedom ends where it causes unjustifiable suffering to others, and minimizing suffering cannot be used to justify total loss of freedom. In other words, the agency/autonomy of an human should stop/be restricted when the suffering of another human/sentient organism begin.

From this framework, moral and legal systems should aim to maximize autonomy while minimizing harm. Here are three examples of laws or policies that would follow logically from that view:

1. Legalization of assisted dying (with safeguards).

→ Increases personal autonomy over one's own body and minimizes

⑦ 1. Legalization of assisted dying (with safeguards).

→ Increases personal autonomy over one's own body and minimizes prolonged, unwanted suffering.

2. Strict regulation of pollution and environmental toxins.

→ Reduces harm and suffering for the population while allowing freedom of economic activity within sustainable limits.

3. Freedom of speech with limits on incitement to violence or harassment.

→ Maximizes autonomy (free expression) while minimizing suffering caused by direct harm or threats.

Every ethical or political stance I take must remain consistent with these premises. If not, my framework will collapse under its own logic.

That's why I'm asking all these questions about yours. Once I fully understand your foundational logic, *I'll be able to reason with you within it, rather than against it.*

... 28 ↩️ ⬆️ 1 ⬇️



██████████ · 2d
Pro Life Moderator Top 1% Commenter

I understand what you're trying to do. Thank you for your position.

I broadly agree with the importance of the things you are talking about, I just think your prioritization of things like autonomy over life is the wrong way around.

I also think that the goal of reducing suffering cannot be validly met by killing others.

In any event, please carry on.

... ↩️ ⬆️ 1 ⬇️



Into-My-Void · 2d
The Skeptic Scientist

Thank you, that's exactly the clarity I was hoping for.

Just to make sure I'm following you correctly: You've said that *human rights are not socially constructed*, but rather **discovered**: objective realities that already exist and that humans merely come to recognize over time, like natural laws.

So, just to confirm: are you now asserting that **human rights exist as objective moral facts**, independent of human perception or consensus, rather than as moral frameworks derived from biological and social necessity?

That clarification matters because it determines what kind of reasoning can be applied. If rights are *objective facts*, then they must be **universally consistent** and **logically applicable in all equivalent cases**, *not situational or pragmatic*.

From what you've said so far, your hierarchy seems to work like this:

1. Preservation of human life is the highest moral obligation.

2. Autonomy and consent are morally valuable but can be overridden when another human life is at stake.

2. **Autonomy and consent are morally valuable** but can be overridden when another human life is at stake.

3. **Reducing suffering is good**, but never through the deliberate ending of a human life.

Would you agree that this accurately represents your framework?

If so, I'd like to examine how it applies in several edge cases: *still entirely within your moral structure, not mine*.

These examples are intended to test whether your model can consistently uphold its own principles without contradiction:

- **Ectopic pregnancy**: this involves a living human embryo that is non-viable and will kill the mother if untreated. Since ending that life is deliberate, does your framework see it as morally permissible under the "life-saving necessity" clause, or is it still morally wrong even though one death is inevitable?
- **Frozen embryos**: you've said they retain full human rights while suspended. Would allowing them to thaw and die naturally in storage count as a form of homicide or neglect, given that it's a deliberate human choice leading to their death?
- **Natural miscarriage**: since every living human organism has rights under your system, does the natural loss of one carry moral weight, or is morality dependent on intentional human action rather than biological outcome?

I'm not trying to argue yet, I'm testing whether the principle of "objective human rights for all living humans" produces logically consistent moral conclusions *across all cases*.

If an objective moral law exists, it should apply universally and coherently without needing ad hoc exceptions.

... 39 ↩️ ⬆️ 1 ↲



• 2d

Pro Life Moderator

Top 1% Commenter

Preservation of human life is the highest moral obligation.

Not exactly. I have the specific right to not be killed. Everyone has an obligation to not take an action to kill me. They do not have an obligation to protect me from anything other than a decision to kill me.

This is a very limited right with negative formulation which forbids a specific action being taken. It is not a positive rights formulation which requires protection of life from general harm.

The other points are accurate.

As for the examples:

Ectopic pregnancy: Action to terminate a pregnancy due to ectopic pregnancy can take place as ectopic pregnancy is a life threatening condition for the mother.

Frozen embryos: Whether the death of the embryos via thawing is neglect or homicide does depend on the circumstances. If the embryos were thawed with the specific intent to kill them or dispose of them as opposed to an accident or botched process, that would be homicide.

If the embryos died but there was no intent to kill, that could be manslaughter if the circumstances of that neglect met the usual requirements for criminal negligence or indifference.

Natural miscarriage: Miscarriages are not deaths with intent to kill, and so would not count as criminal abortions. There could be criminal negligence involved which might make it manslaughter, but that could be very difficult to prove and there is fairly high

9 Natural miscarriage: Miscarriages are not deaths with intent to kill, and so would not count as criminal abortions. There could be criminal negligence involved which might make it manslaughter, but that could be very difficult to prove and there is fairly high bar.

Most miscarriages would be, by far, merely natural death and not criminal.

... ↩ ↑ 1 ↲



Into-My-Void • 2d
The Skeptic Scientist

Thank you, that clarification helps a lot.

To ensure I'm representing your framework accurately, let me restate it in formal terms:

- Every living human has the **right not to be deliberately killed**.
- Others therefore have the moral obligation to **refrain from actions that intentionally cause death**.
- There is **no corresponding positive obligation to sustain another life**, even if failing to do so results in that life's death.

Would you agree that this summary correctly captures your current position before we proceed?

... ⌚ 48 ↩ 🔼 1 ↲



[redacted] • 1d
Pro Life Moderator Top 1% Commenter

Sure, go ahead.

... ↩ ↑ 1 ↲



Into-My-Void • 1d
The Skeptic Scientist

Nice! I appreciate the confirmation.

Now, working within your framework: If moral obligation is purely negative (to refrain from deliberate killing) and does not include any positive duty to sustain another life, I'd like to explore how that applies to pregnancy.

Pregnancy is not a passive condition; **it's a continuous biological process where one human's body sustains another's life**. If no person is morally or legally obligated to donate blood, tissue, or organs to sustain another's survival (even when refusal leads to death) then, under your framework, **obligating a pregnant person to remain pregnant seems to create a unique exception**.

Here's the dilemma I'm testing for consistency:

- Either **no one is ever obligated to use their body to sustain another's life**, in which case *abortion cannot be morally prohibited without contradicting your own principle*;
- Or **pregnancy is the one case where that obligation exists**, in which case *your framework no longer remains purely negative* and introduces an ad hoc positive duty specific to gestation.

How does your model account for that? In other words, *on what moral or logical basis does pregnancy qualify as an exception* to the general rule that **no one is obligated to sustain another's life with their body**?

... ⌚ 35 ↩ 🔼 1 ↲



[redacted] • 1d
Pro Life Moderator Top 1% Commenter

obligating a pregnant person to remain pregnant seems to create a unique exception.

obligated to sustain another's life with their body?

10

... 35 ↩️ ⬆️ 1 ⬇️



• 1d

Pro Life Moderator Top 1% Commenter

obligating a pregnant person to remain pregnant seems to create a unique exception.

The issue I have with your formulation is that you continue to treat pregnancy as if it was life support.

Pregnancy is not saving anyone from death. A normal human being in gestation is perfectly healthy at that age and in that condition. They are in no way damaged or at risk of death in that situation unless someone removes them from that situation.

no one is ever obligated to use their body to sustain another's life

I'd argue that this should be adjusted to no one is obligated to save another's life, which is more consistent with my previous statements.

Obviously, if the right to life obligates you to not kill, a side effect of that is that you cannot change the current situation if it results in the death of a currently healthy individual.

For instance, I am not required to take you onto my airplane on your demand, but I can be obligated to delay removal of a stowaway from my aircraft while it is in flight. This implies that I can be obligated to continue to sustain your life for that interval as a limited side effect of my obligation to not kill.

This obligation does not mean that I am obligated to offer up my airplane to anyone who demands to board it. It only requires that I delay removal to respect the right to life by not killing someone who is already there.

... ↩️ ⬆️ 1 ⬇️



Into-My-Void • 1d

The Skeptic Scientist

Thank you for clarifying. I think I now understand the distinction you're making. Let me restate to ensure accuracy:

1. You view pregnancy not as a form of "life support," but as the natural developmental state of a healthy human organism.
2. Therefore, terminating a pregnancy is not comparable to withdrawing life support, because the fetus is not dying and does not require "saving": it is alive and developing normally within its proper biological context.
3. In your model, the mother's moral obligation isn't to save a life, but to refrain from ending one that is currently viable in its natural state.
4. Consequently, removing the fetus (even early) constitutes an active killing, rather than a mere refusal to sustain another life.

Would that be a fair representation of your view before I continue?

... 23 ↩️ ⬆️ 1 ⬇️



• 1d

Pro Life Moderator Top 1% Commenter

Yes, go ahead.

... ↩️ ⬆️ 1 ⬇️

Continue this thread ▾

View all comments

Yes, go ahead.

... ← ↑ 1 ↓



Into-My-Void • 1d
The Skeptic Scientist

I realize this may anger you, so please read carefully and take the time to properly think about it before answering. Please...

If I understand you correctly, the fetus's state within the uterus is **its natural condition**, and terminating the pregnancy constitutes **an active act that directly ends a healthy life**.

Let me explore that claim within *your own framework* of negative rights and obligations.

In effect, by treating pregnancy as a "natural condition" that must not be interrupted, your framework **redefines "not killing" to include obligated preservation through the use of another person's body**.

In all other contexts, "not killing" means refraining from action: you simply do nothing.

If I walk past a drowning person and choose not to intervene, I have not "killed" them under your system; I have merely declined to save them. **The distinction is precisely what separates negative rights (freedom from harm) from positive duties (obligation to help).**

But **pregnancy**, as *you* describe it, **reverses that logic!**

Because a fetus's continued life depends on active, continuous biological processes inside another's body (blood circulation, oxygen transfer, metabolic regulation) **maintaining the foetus life is not passive. Maintaining the foetus life requires the pregnant person's ongoing physical participation** for months, often at risk to health or autonomy.

So, when *your* framework forbids the pregnant person from withdrawing that participation, it **no longer enforces a passive duty to "not kill"; it enforces a positive duty to keep sustaining another's life**.

That is not abstention; it is compelled action.

This is the precise moment where the category of negative right collapses into positive obligation.

You have effectively transformed "*do not kill*" into "*you must continue to use your body to keep another alive*," which is **an entirely different kind of moral command, one that no other human relationship in your system requires**.

Therefore, **what is presented as a universal, objective rule** ("no one may deliberately kill") **becomes context-dependent coercion**: a command that applies *differently* depending on *which human* is pregnant. That distinction *reintroduces moral relativism* into what you claim is a *universal law*, because *it depends on circumstance, not absolute moral principle*.

That means your model implicitly creates one exception to your negative-rights framework: for all other humans, the right to life forbids *only* deliberate killing; for the fetus, it *additionally obligates another human* to use their body as life support. (This is why I tend to keep treating pregnancy as life support, because it *technically is* in the context where the foetus *can not survive outside of the pregnancy situation*.)

If you accept that exception, then the "objective, universal" right you described earlier becomes conditional, applying differently depending on biological context.

That would mean your framework is not truly universal, but situational, relying on

12

If you accept *that exception*, then the "objective, universal" right you described earlier *becomes conditional*, applying differently depending on biological context.

That would mean your framework is not truly universal, but situational, **relying on pragmatic exceptions rather than absolute moral law**.

Would you agree that, *under your own premises*, pregnancy introduces this asymmetry between "*not killing*" and "*being obligated to preserve*"?

(P.S. Sorry in advance for all the bold and italic, just wanted to ensure maximum clarity)

... 26 ↩️ ⬆️ 1 ↲



[redacted] · 1d

Pro Life Moderator Top 1% Commenter

I am not entirely sure why I would be angry about your response, since it is pretty par for the course for discussions I have been having with pro-choicers for decades now.

But to make you feel better, you don't need to worry about that in this case either.

Moving back to your discussion, we need to review my example of the airplane and the passenger on it.

Like pregnancy, there are functions on an airplane at altitude which would prevent the death of a stowaway. The most obvious are the engines and airframe which prevent that passenger from falling to an untimely death, but also cabin pressurization and heating/cooling as well.

It is my observation that even if there was a stowaway on that plane, or on a ship at sea, or even a spacecraft in space, we would not only avoid throwing the stowaway out of the confines of the conveyance, it would usually be unlawful to do so (unless they represented a threat to the safe operation of the conveyance).

The reason they would not eject such a stowaway is because there remains an obligation to not kill someone.

Obviously, the stowaway will benefit during this time from not only space, but also food, water, oxygen and other basic necessities that the conveyance will provide.

So, it is quite clear that the obligation to not kill can burden those with the obligation.

This is appropriate because the obligation is still limited. As soon as you can remove the stowaway from your ship in a safe manner, you are entitled to do so.

Therefore, the negative rights formulation remains consistent, since maintaining a stowaway or an unborn child, is not an unbound obligation, and it only affects the obligated individual as long as they cannot safely remove their unwanted passenger.

The obligations of human rights can burden us. This must be the case. Otherwise, they would lack any force. They would be nothing more than pretty sentiments.

Thus, a burden on either a ship crew or a mother can be obligated as long as their only option for removal represent death for the human being they wish to remove. If that was not the case, the right to life would be pointless, and I think even you can agree that the right to life is real and requires the ability to enforce it.

Taking all that together, sustaining a child during a pregnancy is not an exception, pragmatic or otherwise.

Instead, the support provided as a side effect of the obligation to not kill is actually a necessary part of the system of human rights, and not any kind of exception.

Too many people arguing your position do not seem to recognize that human rights have implied costs to those who would benefit from them. All rights come with responsibilities, and obligations can incur costs.

As stated previously, these costs are not unbound, which is a primary problem with

13

Too many people arguing your position do not seem to recognize that human rights have implied costs to those who would benefit from them. All rights come with responsibilities, and obligations can incur costs.

As stated previously, these costs are not unbound, which is a primary problem with positive rights formulations. While the costs are not free in negative rights formulations, they are inherently limited to only the minimum which is necessary to maintain the obligation.

... ↩ ↗ 1 ↕



Into-My-Void · 1d
The Skeptic Scientist

This response makes your position much clearer, and I appreciate the precision of your airplane analogy.

That said, I'd like to examine its internal structure carefully, because several of your own statements appear to contradict the foundations of your negative-rights framework.

1. You wrote:

"So, it is quite clear that the obligation to not kill can burden those with the obligation."

Earlier, your framework defined negative rights as obligations to refrain from action: specifically, "I merely need to choose to not kill."

However, if "not killing" can now "burden" someone through continued physical effort or maintenance, then **the obligation has shifted from abstention to participation.**

A burden implies active engagement, the plane's crew must continue flying, maintaining engines, pressurization, and navigation. That's an ongoing act, not a passive omission.

Therefore, under your own wording, "not killing" has become a form of sustained action, which contradicts your earlier definition of a negative right. This appears to contradict your earlier premise.

2. You wrote:

"As soon as you can remove the stowaway from your ship in a safe manner, you are entitled to do so."

This line makes the obligation explicitly conditional. It applies only "as long as you cannot safely remove" the dependent individual.

But conditional obligations are not universal moral laws, they are pragmatic rules tied to circumstance.

That means your "negative right" to life now depends on context: the safety of removal, not the act of killing itself. **This shifts the principle from objective deontology to situational ethics, a form of moral relativism, which you explicitly reject. Again, this appears to contradict your earlier premise.**

3. You wrote:

"Thus, a burden on either a ship crew or a mother can be obligated as long as their only option for removal represent death for the human being they wish to remove."

This directly transforms the negative duty "do not kill" into a positive duty to continue providing life-sustaining support.

In the airplane case, the crew must keep the engines running, cabin pressurized, and course maintained: all active processes that preserve the stowaway's life.

In pregnancy, this obligation requires a human being's body to continue performing metabolic and circulatory functions to sustain another's existence.

These are not passive acts of restraint: they are coerced continuations of

In pregnancy, this obligation requires a human being's body to continue performing metabolic and circulatory functions to sustain another's existence.

These are not passive acts of restraint; they are coerced continuations of life-support. By your own logic, "not killing" now entails an ongoing, active requirement, which re-introduces the very positive obligation your model claims to exclude. This appears to contradict your earlier premise for a third time.

4. Finally, you wrote:

"Otherwise, [human rights] would lack any force. They would be nothing more than pretty sentiments."

But enforcing obligations through compulsion is precisely what you denied earlier when distinguishing "obligation" from "force."

Here, you've conceded that rights must have force; which means that under your own terms, the system is no longer purely negative; it now depends on enforcement and coercion to function.

Taken together, these points suggest that your framework, as stated, has evolved from a universal negative-rights model into a conditional, coercive, context-dependent one. This appears to contradict your earlier premise for a fourth time.

In summary, your analogy turns your original principle against itself. You began with a framework of negative rights: a system where morality forbids active harm but never obligates active service. Yet your airplane example introduces compelled, conditional preservation that relies on force, context, and sustained action. In doing so, it transforms a universal prohibition ("do not kill") into a situational command ("you must keep another alive until removal is safe"). **That shift makes your model internally inconsistent: it no longer operates as an objective, universal law, but as a context-dependent rule enforced by coercion. In short, it refutes itself on its own logic.**

Moral consistency matters because a framework that contradicts itself can't serve as a reliable guide for ethics or law. If the same rule means one thing in principle ("no one is ever obligated to sustain another's life") and another in practice ("a pregnant person must sustain another's life until safe removal"), then the rule ceases to be universal and becomes situational.

Based on your own statements, your position rests on three main premises:

1. Human rights are objective and universal, not dependent on circumstance.
2. The right to life creates only a negative obligation: to refrain from killing, not to sustain.
3. Pregnancy is not an exception to that rule.

But your plane analogy implicitly introduces a fourth premise: that one may be obligated to sustain another's life temporarily if ending that dependence would cause death. That fourth claim directly contradicts the first three.

To preserve internal coherence, one of these has to give way:

- Either human rights **aren't purely negative**,
- or they **aren't universally applicable**,
- or pregnancy **is an exception**.

Otherwise, the framework collapses under its own logic, since it demands both non-interference and compelled preservation at the same time.

So, which premise would you restate to maintain coherence in your framework?

15



Pro Life Moderator • 1d
Top 1% Commenter

A burden implies active engagement, the plane's crew must continue flying, maintaining engines, pressurization, and navigation. That's an ongoing act, not a passive omission.

I disagree that a burden implies active engagement.

The crew would have taken those actions regardless of a stowaway. This is not the burden of a stowaway. The crew wouldn't stop flying their plane just because there was no stowaway there.

The only burden of that stowaway is that it prevents them from having immediate control over access to the plane.

That is a burden, but does not imply action on their part.

In a similar way, pregnancy requires the use of certain functions, but none of those functions represent a choice for the mother to make.

I think many of the actions you attribute to the pregnancy are not really all that... active. You still eat when you are hungry as you otherwise would have. Perhaps you need to eat more than usual, but you're still not eating specifically to protect or gestate the child, you're eating because you are hungry.

I very much disagree with the notion of pregnancy as requiring active participation or choice from the mother. While the process is taxing, she is not choosing to turn it on or off. Her actual decision is to eat or not eat. To obtain medical care or not obtain medical care. She is obligated to do none of those things.

Obviously, as stated before, if the burden to maintain that obligation was to threaten her life, she'd have recourse to end the pregnancy, just like if the needs or disruption of a stowaway disrupted the safe operation of the conveyance they would have the last resort option of ejecting the troublemaker.

Ethics and morality is ultimately the study of decisions. You don't decide to continue pregnancy, as you have no control over a pregnancy in any conscious way. You can decide to terminate one using external action, but you can't simply switch it off and you definitely don't need continuous choice to keep it active.

Pregnancy is an autonomous function of the body. You have some control over whether it is engaged by avoiding sexual activity or impregnation, but you're not making the choice to conceive or to gestate.

... ⏪ ⏩ 1 ⏴ ⏵



Into-My-Void • 1d
The Skeptic Scientist

Well... This clarifies exactly where our reasoning diverges.

You now describe pregnancy as an *autonomous process* that *doesn't involve conscious participation*. However, that creates a fundamental problem for the internal consistency of your framework:

1. If pregnancy truly requires no active participation, then it also carries no moral obligation, since moral obligations apply *only to conscious moral choices*.

2. Yet abortion is undeniably a deliberate act, which means pregnancy itself occupies the moral space between *voluntary continuation* and *deliberate termination*.

2. Yet abortion is undeniably a deliberate act, which means pregnancy itself occupies the moral space between *voluntary continuation* and *deliberate termination*.

3. Therefore, pregnancy cannot be both autonomous and moralized at the same time: if it's purely automatic, it's ethically neutral; if it carries moral weight, it necessarily involves conscious agency.

In short, your framework *can't coherently describe pregnancy as morally binding* while also *claiming it's beyond conscious control*. One of those claims must give way.

So, within your own logic, which of the following do you hold to be true?

a) Pregnancy is autonomous and therefore morally neutral, which removes moral obligation and collapses the ethical claim against abortion; or

b) Pregnancy involves moral agency and therefore requires consent, which makes forced continuation inconsistent with your principle of negative rights?

... 16 1



Pro Life Moderator • 1d
Top 1% Commenter

If pregnancy truly requires no active participation, then it also carries no *moral obligation*, since moral obligations apply only to conscious moral choices.

Correct, but not relevant. Your obligation is not to be pregnant, your obligation is to not kill. If your pregnancy terminated through no fault or choice of your own, you would not have violated the child's right to life.

However, since an induced termination before the child has been sufficiently developed to live outside of the normal prenatal environment of the womb will result in their almost certain demise, so you may not choose to induce termination in that situation unless your own life is threatened by it.

... 1



Into-My-Void • 1d
The Skeptic Scientist

That actually clarifies the hinge point in your logic.

You now agree that moral obligation only applies where there is choice or agency since, as you said, "if pregnancy terminated through no fault or choice of your own, you would not have violated the child's right to life."

That means the **moral category applies only when the pregnant person exercises choice**, not during the automatic continuation of pregnancy. Therefore, **there is no moral obligation to remain pregnant, only a potential moral evaluation of the choice to terminate.**

But here's the problem: If the pregnant person never consented to the condition in the first place, then the pregnancy itself exists outside moral agency. **To impose obligation there would mean assigning moral duties without moral choice**, which your own definition of ethics ("the study of decisions") excludes.

As a reminder :

Ethics and morality is ultimately the study of decisions. You don't

17

2. Yet abortion is undeniably a deliberate act, which means pregnancy itself occupies the moral space between *voluntary continuation* and *deliberate termination*.

3. Therefore, pregnancy cannot be both autonomous and moralized at the same time: if it's purely automatic, it's ethically neutral; if it carries moral weight, it necessarily involves conscious agency.

In short, your framework *can't coherently describe pregnancy as morally binding* while also *claiming it's beyond conscious control*. One of those claims must give way.

So, within your own logic, which of the following do you hold to be true?

a) Pregnancy is autonomous and therefore morally neutral, which removes moral obligation and collapses the ethical claim against abortion; or

b) Pregnancy involves moral agency and therefore requires consent, which makes forced continuation inconsistent with your principle of negative rights?

... 16 1



Pro Life Moderator • 1d
Top 1% Commenter

If pregnancy truly requires no active participation, then it also carries no *moral obligation*, since moral obligations apply only to conscious moral choices.

Correct, but not relevant. Your obligation is not to be pregnant, your obligation is to not kill. If your pregnancy terminated through no fault or choice of your own, you would not have violated the child's right to life.

However, since an induced termination before the child has been sufficiently developed to live outside of the normal prenatal environment of the womb will result in their almost certain demise, so you may not choose to induce termination in that situation unless your own life is threatened by it.

... 1



Into-My-Void • 1d
The Skeptic Scientist

That actually clarifies the hinge point in your logic.

You now agree that moral obligation only applies where there is choice or agency since, as you said, "if pregnancy terminated through no fault or choice of your own, you would not have violated the child's right to life."

That means the **moral category applies only when the pregnant person exercises choice**, not during the automatic continuation of pregnancy. Therefore, **there is no moral obligation to remain pregnant, only a potential moral evaluation of the choice to terminate.**

But here's the problem: If the pregnant person never consented to the condition in the first place, then the pregnancy itself exists outside moral agency. **To impose obligation there would mean assigning moral duties without moral choice**, which your own definition of ethics ("the study of decisions") excludes.

As a reminder :

Ethics and morality is ultimately the study of decisions. You don't

18

As a reminder :

Ethics and morality is ultimately the study of decisions. You don't decide to continue pregnancy, as you have no control over a pregnancy in any conscious way. You can decide to terminate one using external action, but you can't simply switch it off and you definitely don't need continuous choice to keep it active."

So, to keep your framework coherent:

Either

a) **Moral obligation applies only where choice exists:** in which case, **non-consensual pregnancy carries no moral duty;**

Or

b) **Moral obligation can exist without choice,** in which case, **morality itself ceases to be based on conscious agency,** contradicting your own premise.

Which of those two options better fits your understanding of morality?

... 18 1



Pro Life Moderator · 1d

Top 1% Commenter

Moral obligation can exist without choice, in which case, morality itself ceases to be based on conscious agency, contradicting your own premise.

I don't see the logic here. You can be morally obligated to respect human rights without loss of agency, even though you didn't decide whether to undertake those obligations of your own free will.

Or are you suggesting that having a system of human rights removes agency from human beings?

... 1



Into-My-Void · 1d

The Skeptic Scientist

I'll try to clarify the confusion.

I'm *not* suggesting that recognizing human rights removes agency; I'm **pointing out that moral obligation only applies where agency is present.**

There's a crucial distinction between:

1. **Being subject to a moral rule** (as all moral agents are), and
2. **Being morally responsible for an act that you had no power to control.**

Your own definition ("ethics and morality is ultimately the study of decisions") already limits moral evaluation to choices made by moral agents.

But pregnancy, as you described it, involves no conscious choice or control. **So if moral obligation applies to pregnancy despite the absence of choice, that means moral responsibility no longer depends on agency: it applies to involuntary biological states.**

That would make the pregnant body itself a morally accountable actor: which contradicts your claim that morality concerns decisions.

So, to keep your framework coherent, either :

a) **Morality applies only to decisions** (in which case *involuntary pregnancy is morally neutral*),

Or

b) **Morality applies to biological conditions instead of choices,** which would mean *people can be morally judged for things they never chose or controlled.*

19

a) **Morality applies *only* to decisions** (in which case *involuntary pregnancy is morally neutral*),

Or

b) **Morality applies to *biological conditions* instead of choices**, which would mean *people can be morally judged for things they never chose or controlled*.

Would you agree that moral responsibility requires the capacity for choice and control?

... ⌚ 19 ↩️ 🔼 1 ↕️



Pro Life Moderator • 1d
🗨️ Top 1% Commenter

I'm not sure I follow your logic here.

Humans can be put into situations beyond their control. That does not relieve them of the responsibility of acting ethically or morally in those situations.

Even if pregnancy is out of your control, you still have to respect the life of the other human being in the situation to not be killed, just like you might have to respect the rights of illegal immigrants to your country, even if you did not invite them.

Neither the actions of others, nor uncontrollable situations relieve you of moral obligations.

You're not responsible for the uncontrollable situation, but you **ARE** responsible for how you choose to act in relation to the situation.

Like I said, you have every right to avoid pregnancy, particularly since there is no second party until conception.

However, once pregnant, you have a responsibility to not kill, regardless of how that came about, unless you're dealing with a threat to your life.

People aren't being judged for situations they cannot control. You are not in any trouble for being pregnant, nor would you be in trouble if the child died of some disease or natural cause.

You are only being held responsible for making sure you do not choose to intentionally terminate which is a decision *completely* under your control.

... ↩️ 🔼 1 ↕️



Into-My-Void • 1d
The Skeptic Scientist

If I understand correctly, you're saying that while pregnancy itself is involuntary, moral responsibility applies to how one responds to that situation: specifically, **that the moral choice lies in whether or not to intentionally end the pregnancy.**

That's consistent internally up to a point, but here's where I'm struggling to reconcile your framework with itself:

- You've said **morality is about conscious decisions.**
- You've also said **pregnancy involves no conscious decision.**
- Yet **you treat *continuing the pregnancy as morally obligatory, even though doing so requires no decision or act of will.***

So it seems the *moral weight* in your framework actually **rests entirely on the choice to terminate, not on the state of being pregnant itself.**

That makes pregnancy morally neutral, and only the decision to intervene morally evaluable.



That makes pregnancy morally neutral, and only the decision to intervene morally evaluable.

If that's the case, then the ethical judgment of abortion can only rest on whether the fetus already qualifies as a rights-bearing "human", which, as we discussed earlier, **is the very premise the argument assumes but never establishes.**

Would you agree that, in your model, moral responsibility arises only at the moment of conscious intervention (the choice to terminate), and that pregnancy prior to that remains morally neutral?

... 9 ↩️ 🔼 1 ↲



• 1d

Pro Life Moderator Top 1% Commenter

Yet you treat continuing the pregnancy as morally obligatory, even though *doing so requires no decision or act of will.

Not at all. In fact in my last few comments I stated that pregnancy in and of itself is NOT morally obligatory.

You are not required to be pregnant at any time. And if the pregnancy ends of its own accord, there is no problem with that either.

However, your preference to be pregnant or not cannot justify choosing to kill the child to end the pregnancy. That choice is not open to you morally. Not because pregnancy is obligatory, but because "not killing" is obligatory.

The ends do not justify the means. A pregnancy having ended to me is perhaps sad, but morally neutral, but how the pregnancy ends does matter if there are choices involved.

If that's the case, then the ethical judgment of abortion can only rest on whether the fetus already qualifies as a rights-bearing "human", which, as we discussed earlier, is the very premise the argument assumes but never establishes.

Again, if we go back to the start of this, I am not *assuming* anything about whether the human fetus is a rights bearing individual. I was merely pointing out that there was a counter position to your position in that regard, nothing more.

I can definitely break down the reasoning for that position all you like, you just haven't asked any questions about it, so I haven't.

Please be aware, I can go very deep on every point in this debate and am willing to do so, but I will not go off on those deeper discussion unless that is the topic of current discussion. Otherwise, this discussion will become rather muddled rather fast.

Don't believe for a second that I am just "assuming" that a fetal human is a rights bearing individual "just because".

... ↩️ 🔼 1 ↲



Into-My-Void • 1d

The Skeptic Scientist

Ummm...

Earlier, you confirmed two key summaries of your position:

First, you agreed that your framework is grounded in negative rights, defined as:

1. Every living human has the right not to be deliberately killed.

First, you agreed that your framework is grounded in negative rights, defined as:

1. Every living human has the right not to be deliberately killed.
2. Others therefore have the moral obligation to refrain from actions that intentionally cause death.
3. There is **no corresponding positive obligation to sustain another life, even if failing to do so results in that life's death.**

Later, you also confirmed this description of your position:

1. You view pregnancy not as "life support," but as the natural developmental state of a healthy human organism.
2. Therefore, terminating a pregnancy is not comparable to withdrawing life support, because the fetus is alive and developing normally within its proper biological context.
3. In your model, **the mother's moral obligation is not to save a life, but to refrain from ending one that is currently viable in its natural state.**
4. Consequently, removing the fetus (even early) constitutes an active killing, rather than a refusal to sustain another life.

However, taken together, these two descriptions contradict one another.

If there is truly **no positive obligation to sustain another life, then forbidding a pregnant person from ending the pregnancy would violate your own principle.** Continuing a pregnancy necessarily involves the use of one's body to sustain another's life, that is a form of sustaining, regardless of whether the fetus is "naturally developing."

So, under your own premises, **the two following claims cannot both be true:**

- that **no one is ever morally obligated to sustain another life,** and
- that a pregnant person is **morally obligated to continue sustaining a fetus.**

One of these must give way. Either:

a) Your framework **includes a positive obligation to sustain another's life after all,** which contradicts your negative-rights model, **since negative rights forbid only active harm,** not withdrawal of support;

or

b) **Pregnancy is morally neutral until a deliberate act of killing occurs,** meaning that **terminating a pregnancy by removing the fetus is not itself an act of killing.**

At the moment of removal, the fetus remains biologically alive; its subsequent death occurs because it can no longer access the host's physiological support.

That distinction (between directly causing death and allowing death to occur by ending support) is the foundation of all negative-rights reasoning. **A refusal to provide continued bodily support is morally equivalent to passively letting die, not actively killing.**

To preserve internal consistency, which of these two revisions best reflects your actual position?



Pro Life Moderator • 1d
Top 1% Commenter

If there is truly no positive obligation to sustain another life, then forbidding a pregnant person from ending the pregnancy would violate your own principle.

I disagree entirely. A positive obligation to sustain life would require an unbound obligation to save ALL lives. The right to life merely requires you to not choose to terminate the pregnancy if the child will be killed.

When we say "positive right" we would say, "You have a right to be kept alive". That right could be generalized to suggest that anyone could demand your assistance, your resources, even your organs at any time as long as it could save a life.

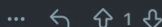
If there was any person who needed a kidney donation, and you had two, you'd be required to give up one. That is what "the right to be kept alive" means.

What we are talking about is merely a limited side effect of being unable to kill someone else. This is not a positive obligation, it's not even really a choice. You're not choosing to continue the pregnancy, you're just not choosing to end it in that particular way.

What you seem to be failing to understand is that a limited logical implication of a right is not the same thing as a general right to the effect in question.

Not killing the child with an abortion does not imply a general obligation to remain pregnant or a general obligation to sustain life.

This is a very consequential difference that I think you aren't understanding or giving enough consideration to.



Into-My-Void • 1d
The Skeptic Scientist

Thank you for clarifying. I think I now see exactly where the conceptual split occurs in your reasoning.

You distinguish between a **general positive obligation to sustain life** (which you reject) and a **specific obligation not to kill** (which you accept), and you're treating the continuation of pregnancy as merely a "side effect" of that latter rule.

But here's where I struggle to reconcile that distinction:

If pregnancy continues only because the pregnant person's body is performing ongoing biological functions that directly sustain another life, **then preventing them from ending that process necessarily obligates them to keep sustaining it.**

You can redefine that as "not killing," but materially, **it still requires one human's body to remain in use for another's survival.**

That means your rule "not to kill" functions *identically* to a positive obligation in this context: **it forbids withdrawal of support, not just direct harm.**

To put it another way *you* give "not killing" **two** definitions:

- In every other situation, "not killing" means abstaining from interference.
- In pregnancy, under your framework, "not killing" means maintaining an active biological dependency until the fetus can survive removal.

That's not mere abstention; it's compelled preservation.

So, for the sake of clarity and consistency:

Do you believe "not killing" includes a moral duty to refrain from ending a biological dependency, even when that dependency requires ongoing use of another person's body?

Because if so, then your system does, in fact, impose a positive obligation: it just

13

Do you believe "not killing" includes a moral duty to refrain from ending a biological dependency, even when that dependency requires ongoing use of another person's body?

Because if so, then your system does, in fact, impose a positive obligation; **it just reframes it semantically.**

Also, consider this :

You're treating the concept of "not killing" as if it has two distinct meanings depending on the situation, and that's what makes your framework internally unstable.

In all other moral contexts, "not killing" is defined negatively: it means refraining from an active intervention that would cause someone's death.

→ If I refuse to donate blood, a kidney, or food, I am letting die, not killing.

→ The moral evaluation stops at my direct action: I didn't kill; I merely didn't save.

But in the context of pregnancy, you redefine "not killing" to mean something else entirely:

→ It now requires continued participation in sustaining another's biological life, even if doing so uses one's own body and resources.

→ Under this version, ending support is recast as active killing.

That's a semantic shift, not a moral one.

The same phrase ("not killing") is doing two incompatible jobs:

In one context (organ donation, starvation, disease), **it means do nothing;**

In another (pregnancy), **it means continue acting to preserve another's life.**

Once a moral term changes definition depending on circumstance, it ceases to describe a consistent ethical rule and becomes situational: which collapses its claim to universality.

If the moral weight of "not killing" depends on the type of dependency involved, then the framework isn't grounded in an objective law; it's grounded in contextual exceptions. That's moral relativism wearing the mask of objectivity.

... 6 1



23h

Pro Life Moderator Top 1% Commenter

That means your rule "not to kill" functions identically to a positive obligation in this context: it forbids withdrawal of support, not just direct harm.

Again, I regard a positive formulation to be a statement that "you must do X". This positive formulation is to be avoided because its effects are unbound.

By using the negative formulation, you still leave open other potential avenues for dealing with the problem.

In this debate we sometimes talk about the currently science fiction concept of artificial wombs, to which we could theoretically evacuate an undesired child from a mother.

If there was a positive obligation to sustain pregnancy, we would not have the option to evacuate the child to such an apparatus. The mother would be obligated to sustain the pregnancy regardless of options.

Under the negatively constructed right to life, if you have a method which does not

24

... 6 1



• 23h

Pro Life Moderator Top 1% Commenter

That means your rule "not to kill" functions identically to a positive obligation in this context: it forbids withdrawal of support, not just direct harm.

Again, I regard a positive formulation to be a statement that "you must do X". This positive formulation is to be avoided because its effects are unbound.

By using the negative formulation, you still leave open other potential avenues for dealing with the problem.

In this debate we sometimes talk about the currently science fiction concept of artificial wombs, to which we could theoretically evacuate an undesired child from a mother.

If there was a positive obligation to sustain pregnancy, we would not have the option to evacuate the child to such an apparatus. The mother would be obligated to sustain the pregnancy regardless of options.

Under the negatively constructed right to life, if you have a method which does not kill the child, you would have the option to terminate without killing the child and you could freely choose to do so.

Remember, rights are nothing without responsibilities, but the responsibilities are clearly limited and delimited.

To be clear, I am not so much stating that you have no situation where sustaining the pregnancy cannot be forced, what I am saying is that such instances are carefully circumscribed by the negatively formulated right in question.

You're looking at this somewhat differently than I am. My concern is not with preventing forced sustenance, but with carefully limiting it to when it cannot be avoided.

Under this version, ending support is recast as active killing.

That is not correct. Recall that what is happening in pregnancy is not life support. The child is not being saved from a danger by gestating.

Consider that your patient in that situation requires your organ because their organ is already failing. They are terminally ill.

If you were to refuse to donate a kidney... or even somehow *retract* the permission to donate that kidney... they still die of kidney failure, not of failure to donate. Your choice to donate or not did not kill them.

In pregnancy, that child, if left alone, will not die. The mother is taking no active action to keep the child alive. The pregnancy is not life support for the child.

If you abort, the reason for the death of the child isn't the pregnancy (which is entirely healthy and normal for a human of that age), but your choice to terminate.

... 1



Let me test your reasoning with an analogous biological case, using your own criteria.

Example: Tapeworms or fetal parasites in mammals. A tapeworm inside a host's intestine is fully alive, developing normally, and thriving within its proper biological context. If the host expels or kills the parasite, it dies.

By your framework:

- The tapeworm is a living organism with its own biological integrity.
- It is "healthy" and "developing normally" within its natural environment.
- Its death occurs only if the host deliberately disrupts that natural state.

Following your earlier definition, that ending a "normal, healthy" biological process is morally equivalent to "killing", the act of expelling the parasite would be a moral wrong, because the parasite "would have lived if left alone."

But we intuitively recognize that isn't how morality works. We don't assign a moral duty to sustain a parasite, even though its dependency is completely natural and its removal causes death. The host's act isn't "killing" in the moral sense, it's withdrawing a sustaining environment.

That reveals the flaw: **Under your logic, any dependent organism whose life ends upon separation from its host must be "killed" rather than simply "allowed to die."** This collapses the distinction between killing and letting die, turning every act of withdrawal from a dependent relationship into homicide.

If you maintain that the fetus is "alive and developing normally within its proper biological context," then you must explain why pregnancy counts as a unique exception: why removing one dependent organism (a tapeworm) is morally neutral, but removing another (a fetus) is murder.

If the difference isn't biological (since both are dependent organisms within a host) then **it must be philosophical or moral**, which means your system isn't purely biological or objective after all, but value-based and context-dependent.

I can already anticipate the objection: you might argue that the difference between the tapeworm and the fetus is that the fetus is human, and thus possesses human rights that the parasite does not.

But that distinction doesn't solve the logical problem: it only shifts it.

If your entire moral framework is based on biology alone (as you've repeatedly said: "having a human genome implemented in a living organism"), then "being human" is simply a taxonomic category, not a moral one. Species identity by itself cannot generate moral obligation without adding a moral premise: namely, that "all humans, and only humans, possess intrinsic moral worth."

But that is a **value judgment, not a biological fact**. It reintroduces subjectivity: *the very moral relativism you've explicitly rejected.*

By contrast, the parasite example is structurally identical to the fetus in every way that your own framework says matters:

- Both are alive and developing normally within their proper biological contexts.
- Both will die if removed from the host.
- Neither can survive independently at that stage.
- Both depend entirely on another organism's body for survival.

If removing the parasite isn't murder, then logically, removing the fetus can't be either, unless you add an extra, non-biological rule that says "humans are morally special."



said: "having a human genome implemented in a living organism"), then "being human" is simply a taxonomic category, not a moral one. Species identity by itself cannot generate moral obligation without adding a moral premise: namely, that "all humans, and only humans, possess intrinsic moral worth."

But that is a **value judgment, not a biological fact**. It reintroduces subjectivity: *the very moral relativism you've explicitly rejected*.

By contrast, the parasite example is structurally identical to the fetus in every way that your own framework says matters:

- Both are alive and developing normally within their proper biological contexts.
- Both will die if removed from the host.
- Neither can survive independently at that stage.
- Both depend entirely on another organism's body for survival.

If removing the parasite isn't murder, then logically, removing the fetus can't be either, unless you add an extra, non-biological rule that says "humans are morally special."

And if you add that rule, then your framework is no longer objective or biologically derived. **It becomes a moral axiom: one that must be believed rather than demonstrated.** That means **your system depends on an unprovable value claim, not an observable biological truth.**

So either:

- The tapeworm analogy holds, and "removal" isn't killing; or
- The analogy fails, because human life has special moral status, which would make your system *philosophically moral*, not biologically objective as claimed.

... 11 ↩️ ⬆️ 1 ⬇️



• 22h

Pro Life Moderator

🗨️ Top 1% Commenter

Following your earlier definition, that ending a "normal, healthy" biological process is morally equivalent to "killing", the act of expelling the parasite would be a moral wrong, because the parasite "would have lived if left alone."

You can kill a tapeworm because they are:

1. Not a human and thus have no right to life.

2. They are a threat to your life.

Strictly speaking I really only need point #1 to justify killing a tapeworm.

Please do not forget... we are talking about *human* rights, which are limited to humans. We can do things to other animals that we cannot do to humans.

Species identity by itself cannot generate moral obligation without adding a moral premise: namely, that "all humans, and only humans, possess intrinsic moral worth."

This is not necessary. You're making the mistake many people make of assuming that I think humans are somehow special.

Humans could be completely worthless as a species and still have the prerogative to apply rules for humans to other humans. As long as we do not argue that other animals have obligations to us, we do not need to consider other species in our discussion. They may have no rights, but they also have no responsibilities either.

... ↩️ ⬆️ 1 ⬇️

You keep distinguishing between “not killing” and “sustaining,” but your examples treat them as the same thing when dependency exists.

You wrote that “the child, if left alone, will not die”: but the child is not left alone; it exists entirely within and because of another person’s ongoing biological function. The only reason it survives is that another human’s body is continuously supplying oxygen, nutrients, and waste exchange.

That is precisely what “sustaining” means. Calling it “not killing” doesn’t change the underlying reality that one body is being used to keep another alive.

If ending that dependency is “killing,” then you’ve redefined “not killing” to mean “you must continue to provide your body as life support until an alternative becomes available.” That is, functionally, a positive obligation: it compels bodily participation for another’s survival.

You say this isn’t “life support” because the fetus isn’t “in danger.” But that’s a distinction without a difference: every dependent organism will die if its life support is withdrawn, whether the condition is “pathological” or “natural.” Dependency, not illness, is what defines the support relationship.

And since you also accept that “forced sustenance can be justified when unavoidable,” you’ve explicitly admitted that the duty to refrain from killing can obligate bodily preservation: which turns your negative-rights model into a positive one in practice.

So to maintain internal coherence, you’d need to clarify this point:

If “not killing” forbids ending an involuntary biological dependency that requires one’s own body to sustain another, then the obligation is no longer purely negative. Would you accept that this conclusion follows from your premises?

...

🕒 10

↩

👤 1

↻



• 22h

Pro Life Moderator

🗨 Top 1% Commenter

You wrote that “the child, if left alone, will not die”: but the child is not left alone; it exists entirely within and because of another person’s ongoing biological function.

When I say, “left alone”, I mean that no choices are being made to alter the child’s situation or the pregnancy.

As I pointed out before, pregnancy itself is not an active function, it is fully automated. The mother does not control it and does not make decisions about the process itself. She can intervene in it artificially, but does not otherwise have control over it and needs to make no deliberate decision to continue it.

While she does eat and thereby nourishes the child, she would be eating anyway. She simply continues to eat, drink and take care of herself.

There are millions of organisms in and on our body which live their entire lives nourishing themselves on us and we have zero control over this. It would be silly to say that we are “allowing” them to do this simply because we happen to own and have some control over the body which is their environment.

That is precisely what “sustaining” means. Calling it “not killing” doesn’t change the underlying reality that one body is being used to keep another alive.

I think you’re missing the point here. I am saying that there is no general obligation to sustain. I am not suggesting that continued sustenance cannot be



think you're missing the point here. I am saying that there is no general obligation to sustain, I am not suggesting that continued sustenance cannot be a side effect of having no ethical option to terminate the pregnancy early.

The fact that you can be obligated to delay termination of sustenance because you have no ethical option to terminate does not create a slippery slope positive right to general sustenance.

But that's a distinction without a difference: every dependent organism will die if its life support is withdrawn, whether the condition is "pathological" or "natural." Dependency, not illness, is what defines the support relationship.

I disagree. Illness defines what life support is, not mere dependency.

Otherwise, you would have to call the atmosphere of the Earth "life support", which is absurd. Born humans are *dependent* on the atmosphere of Earth and its particular biosphere to live in. Being born does not mean we now have no restrictions on the environment we live in.

Unborn humans merely have a somewhat more restricted environment than born individuals. It is not "life support" to be in your proper environment for your species and level of development.

And since you also accept that "forced sustenance can be justified when unavoidable," you've explicitly admitted that the duty to refrain from killing can obligate bodily preservation: which turns your negative-rights model into a positive one in practice.

Again, not correct. A positive right has an unbound set of requirements. You might have a "right to be housed" or you have a "right to work" are positive rights which guarantee you something like a house or a job and if you lose your house or job somehow, then the obligation exists to get you another house or another job.

The right to life does NOT guarantee you sustenance sight unseen. Such situations are limited to when it is possible to terminate safely. No pregnancy lasts forever, by design. There is a natural termination to any sustenance side-effect with either the birth of the child, or their death through other causes. (Or via future-tech solutions that alter the viability of the child outside of the womb).

The obligation remains purely negative for this reason. You cannot re-term the obligation as positive simply because the obligation allows for existing effects to continue. A positive obligation would require a positive change to the *status quo*, which this does not do.

... ⏪ ⏩ 1 ⏴ ⏵



Into-My-Void · 22h
The Skeptic Scientist

The problem is that your framework now relies on a semantic distinction between "sustaining" and "not killing" that collapses when applied consistently.

If a moral agent is forbidden from withdrawing their body from a process that sustains another's life, **that is a positive obligation in practice, even if the process is "automatic."**

The fact that the body performs it without conscious effort doesn't change the moral reality: the person is not free to end it.

Moral freedom to act or refrain is what defines negative rights; when that freedom is removed, the obligation becomes positive, regardless of duration.

Your appeal to "natural environment" doesn't resolve the contradiction. A tapeworm or any obligate symbiont is also in its "natural environment" inside

A Your appeal to "natural environment" doesn't resolve the contradiction. A tapeworm or any obligate symbiont is also in its "natural environment" inside a host. If removed, it dies. Not because it's "ill," but because its dependency was interrupted. By your logic, the host would be morally forbidden to expel it, since "it would live if left alone."

That shows that "natural dependency" can't serve as the moral distinction. Either the right to life forbids withdrawal of bodily support (a positive obligation), or it only forbids direct killing (a negative one).

You can't have it both ways without redefining "not killing" differently depending on the situation.

So to keep your model coherent, which definition of "not killing" do you affirm?

a) Refraining from active harm (the standard negative right),

or

b) Maintaining biological support until it can be safely terminated (a positive obligation limited by context)?

... 13 1



Pro Life Moderator • 21h

Top 1% Commenter

Moral freedom to act or refrain is what defines negative rights; when that freedom is removed, the obligation becomes positive, regardless of duration.

I do not agree with this assessment at all.

I have been discussing positive and negative formulations of rights and how they *limit* the scope of obligations. You seem to be focused on something else entirely.

A tapeworm or any obligate symbiont is also in its "natural environment" inside a host. If removed, it dies. Not because it's "ill," but because its dependency was interrupted. By your logic, the host would be morally forbidden to expel it, since "it would live if left alone."

Again, I stated my two objections to the tapeworm example, and neither quoted anything about "natural environment". You are trying to rebut a point I never made.

... 1



Into-My-Void • 21h

The Skeptic Scientist

By limiting moral obligation to "humans only," you've shifted from an objective biological law to a species-specific social rule. If moral duty applies only to members of one species because that species chooses to apply it, then rights are no longer discovered facts of nature: they're constructed agreements among humans.

That's moral relativism at the species level: a rule that's true for humans because humans decided it, not because it exists independently of human perception. **So your framework is no longer biologically objective: it's socially self-referential, which collapses the claim of universality you began with.**

Would you agree that restricting moral scope to one species **makes human rights context-dependent rather than objectively universal?**

More on that :

More on that :

When you say,

"Humans could be completely worthless as a species and still have the prerogative to apply rules for humans to other humans,"

you've **shifted from claiming human rights are discovered moral facts** (existing independently of human perception) to **claiming they are rules humans create and enforce among themselves**.

That's a fundamental contradiction.

If rights are discovered, they exist whether humans acknowledge them or not, like gravity or thermodynamics. If rights are applied only by humans to humans, then they're products of collective agreement, not natural law.

You can't coherently hold both:

- An objective moral system (rights exist independently of opinion),
- And a species-specific moral application (rights exist only within human convention).

Once rights depend on who's applying them, they cease to be objective. The moment you say "only humans have rights because we decided it," you've reduced your framework to **intersubjective constructivism**, the very thing you denied when you said rights aren't "negotiated" but "recognized."

In short:

If rights are real, humans don't grant them.

If humans grant them, they're not real, they're social agreements.

You can't discover what you've invented.

... 13 ↩️ ⬆️ 2 ⬇️



Into-My-Void • 21h
The Skeptic Scientist

I want to recap why I believe your framework no longer holds internal consistency.

Throughout our exchange, you've shifted several foundational premises, **each change undermines the claim that your system is objective, universal, and purely negative.**

1. Origin of rights: You began by saying human rights are discovered natural facts, but later said humans "apply rules for humans to other humans." That's a move from objective law to social construction. If humans create and enforce rights, they're no longer discovered; they're negotiated.

2. Moral agency: You first defined morality as "the study of decisions," yet later claimed moral obligation can exist "without choice." That removes agency from morality altogether — a direct contradiction of your own definition.

3. Negative vs. positive rights: You said no one is ever obligated to sustain another's life. Yet you also insist a pregnant person must continue sustaining a fetus until birth. That turns "not killing" into "you must keep another alive", a positive duty disguised as a negative one.

4. Pregnancy and moral weight: You've described pregnancy as both

③

4. Pregnancy and moral weight: You've described pregnancy as both automatic and morally binding. But if it's automatic, it's morally neutral; if it's moralized, it's not automatic. Both cannot be true simultaneously.

5. Force and obligation: You denied that moral obligation involves coercion, yet later said rights "must have force" or they're meaningless. That's a direct reversal, an admission that enforcement (coercion) is required for your system to function.

6. Universality: You call your framework "objective," but you limit it to humans because only humans apply it. That's not universality, that's species-level relativism.

Taken together, these shifts show your model doesn't operate as a single coherent moral law. It alternates between natural law and social rule, between negative and positive duty, between agency and automatism, depending on which version is needed to defend a point.

That's why I see it as inconsistent: **it continually changes definitions rather than applying one stable principle across all cases.**

In contrast, here's what consistency looks like.

Since we've both clarified our frameworks, I'll show how mine remains coherent when applied to abortion: not to persuade, but to illustrate internal stability.

Within my framework:

Moral relativism means there are no objective moral absolutes, only human-created principles designed to maximize coexistence.

The two governing principles are **reduction of suffering** and **autonomy / agency**, which must be balanced.

(Now you could argue against those founding principles, but not really against the logical follow up once they are established.)

1. Autonomy

Pregnancy involves one human's body sustaining another's life. Compelling someone to use their body this way violates personal autonomy. The decision must therefore remain with the pregnant individual, since autonomy includes control over one's biological processes.

2. Suffering

Forcing unwanted or unsafe pregnancies predictably increases suffering (physical, psychological, and social).

- Where abortion is restricted, maternal mortality and morbidity rise (JAMA 2021; Commonwealth Fund 2022).
- Where abortion is accessible, unsafe procedures and maternal deaths fall (WHO 2022).

Before viability (~24 weeks), fetuses lack the neural architecture required for pain or conscious experience.

3. Scientific threshold for fetal pain or consciousness

According to the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG 2022), the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

32

3. Scientific threshold for fetal pain or consciousness

According to the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG 2022), the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG 2021), and Derbyshire & Bockmann (2020, J. Perinat. Anesth.):

- Pain perception requires thalamocortical connectivity, which does not form before ~24 weeks.
- Before that, cortical activity is non-integrative: *the fetus cannot consciously experience suffering.*

Therefore, before ~24 weeks, there is no capacity for sentient experience: no pain, no awareness, no suffering.

4. Balancing principles over time

Before ~24 weeks:

- The fetus cannot suffer.
 - The pregnant person can.
- Forcing continuation of pregnancy increases suffering and violates autonomy.

Consistent conclusion: abortion access during this stage aligns fully with both moral principles.

After ~24 weeks:

Thalamocortical pathways develop; pain and limited awareness become plausible.

- The fetus becomes a potential subject of suffering.

Abortion at this stage should be considered case-by-case:

- If pregnancy endangers the mother's life or wellbeing, abortion minimizes total suffering.
 - If not, restrictions that reduce fetal suffering may be justified, so long as they don't erase complete maternal autonomy.
-

Result

Within my framework, abortion before ~24 weeks is morally permissible because it reduces total suffering and preserves autonomy.

After that threshold, restrictions can only be justified if they minimize greater suffering while preserving as much autonomy as possible.

Every conclusion flows directly from the same principles: no exceptions, no semantic shifts, no redefinitions.

I'm not claiming moral superiority, only demonstrating coherence. In my system, every outcome about abortion flows logically from autonomy and harm reduction.

I'd be interested to see whether your model can achieve the same coherence.

If human rights are objective biological facts, and if no one has a positive obligation to sustain another's life, then how does your framework treat pregnancy, a state where one life depends on another's body, without introducing an exception?

Because if an exception must be introduced, then your system isn't a natural law. It's a constructed moral hierarchy, one that prioritizes

23

Because if an exception must be introduced, then your system isn't a natural law. It's a constructed moral hierarchy, one that prioritizes certain humans over others.

Feel free to test my system for the most extreme cases you can think of if you feel like reversing the roles a little.

Sources:

- ACOG Committee Opinion #786 (2021): Fetal Awareness and Pain
- RCOG Scientific Impact Paper #59 (2022): Fetal Awareness: Review of Research and Recommendations
- Derbyshire SWG & Bockmann JC (2020). Reconsidering Fetal Pain. J Perinat Anesth 30(3): 299–306
- World Health Organization (2022). Abortion care guideline
- JAMA Network (2021). Association Between State Abortion Restrictions and Maternal Mortality
- Commonwealth Fund (2022). The U.S. Maternal Health Divide

... 13 1



Into-My-Void · 11h
The Skeptic Scientist

I understand this discussion has gotten deep, but I'm still genuinely interested in how you'd reconcile the two central claims of your framework:

1. **That human rights are discovered natural laws:** objective truths that exist independently of human recognition, and
2. **That humans "apply rules for humans to other humans,"** meaning rights exist only within our species by our own enforcement.

If rights are truly objective, they should hold even if no humans existed to recognize or enforce them, just as gravity would still operate without observers. But if they depend on human recognition or application, then they're social constructs, not discovered facts of nature.

That's not a rhetorical point, it's a logical one. Both statements can't be true at the same time. Either rights exist independently of us (and thus apply universally, not just to humans), or they're conventions we create and enforce among ourselves, which makes them context-dependent by definition.

I'd be very interested in your clarification on how those two premises coexist without contradiction.

... 9 1



Into-My-Void · 2h
The Skeptic Scientist

If you ghost this one, I'll count it as you waving the white flag... Silence = Concession.

I just want to clarify something about our exchange. When I press you on logical consistency, I'm not demanding the impossible: it is possible to build a moral framework that forbids abortion without contradiction.

But doing so means **owning the full consequences** of what that

34 If you ghost this one, I'll count it as you waving the white flag... Silence = Concession.

I just want to clarify something about our exchange. When I press you on logical consistency, I'm not demanding the impossible: it is possible to build a moral framework that forbids abortion without contradiction.

But doing so means **owning the full consequences** of what that framework entails. You can't claim moral absolutes without accepting everything those absolutes require when applied consistently.

So, what follows isn't a trap. It's an example of how your position could have been coherent, *if* you were willing to embrace what it really demands.

To make your framework internally consistent, you'd have to fully adopt **biological moral realism**: a system where morality is not about choice, rights, or consent, but about biological function.

That version could look like this:

1. Morality = functional conformity to biology.

A moral act is one that sustains or optimizes human survival and reproduction. An immoral act is one that disrupts or prevents it.

2. Pregnancy = fulfillment of biological purpose.

Termination = anti-functional act (biologically destructive), and thus immoral by definition, regardless of intent or consent. No appeal to moral agency is required — morality follows from species-level teleology.

3. Moral obligation exists independently of will.

Humans aren't moral agents by choice but by nature: each person's duty is to perpetuate life. Pregnancy is obligatory when biologically possible, because reproduction is the organism's purpose.

This version is *logically consistent*, but the consequences are *enormous*:

- Autonomy disappears: personal choice has no moral weight; only biological function does.
- Contraception, abortion, euthanasia, suicide, and voluntary childlessness all become immoral, as they contradict the reproductive telos.
- Homosexuality, sterilization, and refusal to reproduce would likewise be condemned as biological non-function.
- Rights are no longer universal or inherent, they exist only to enforce the continuity of the species.
- Killing becomes wrong only if it harms human survival overall, not because of moral worth.

This is how your anti-abortion position could remain self-consistent, but only if you admit what it really is: a **teleological survival ethic**, not an objective rights theory.

It's internally coherent, yes: but it's not about human dignity, freedom, or equality... It's about the species using *individuals* as *instruments* of its own continuation.

(33) Deleted
Comment removed by moderator
Deleted Comment 1
(Last 2 picks)

... ⬅️ ⬆️ 2 ➡️



Into-My-Void · 1d
The Skeptic Scientist

I want to clarify something, because I think there's been a misunderstanding about my intentions in this exchange.

When I presented the "biological moral realism" example, **I wasn't attributing that view to you.** I was demonstrating what a *logically coherent moral framework* looks like when it's constructed properly in the form:

(1) State the worldview → (2) State the premises → (3) Derive the logical conclusions that follow from them.

That's exactly what I did earlier with my own moral relativist framework, and again with a different one that could, in theory, justify your anti-abortion stance *without* internal contradiction. The point was to show that **consistency is achievable, but it comes at the cost of accepting the full implications of one's premises.**

I was not mocking you or misrepresenting your view. I was modeling the method of moral reasoning used in philosophy classrooms. My ethics colleague teaches this to high school students; they can usually articulate coherent frameworks with minimal training. Given how articulate you are, I was surprised that you keep slipping between frameworks rather than defining one clearly.

That's not an insult, it's an observation about form, not content. You're skilled at political rhetoric, but rhetoric and moral philosophy aren't the same discipline. In politics, shifting between premises to defend a conclusion is standard; in philosophy, it's the precise definition of inconsistency.

So here's my direct challenge, offered respectfully:

Can you now state your own worldview using the same structured method?

1. Worldview: What kind of moral system do you believe in? (e.g., objective moral realism, divine command, biological teleology, deontology, etc.)

2. Premises: What are its foundational principles? (e.g., "All living humans have inherent rights derived from their biology.")

3. Conclusions: What moral rules or outcomes necessarily follow from those premises, applied consistently — including cases like abortion, euthanasia, contraception, and autonomy?

If you can do that clearly, I'll consider your framework *intellectually legitimate*, even if I disagree with it. But if you can't, then I'll have to conclude that you're skilled in argumentation, not in moral philosophy, which are two very different things.

I'm not trying to "win." I'm trying to see if a coherent moral defense of total abortion prohibition is *even possible*. If you can construct one, then we'll *finally* be able to discuss its premises *intellectually*, not rhetorically.

So far, you've avoided that question entirely.

(And for clarity's sake, I'm not here to debate US politics. I live in Canada, where abortion hasn't been a political issue since 1988. I'm interested in the philosophy of it: whether the moral logic behind a total ban can hold together without contradiction. That's the only question I'm trying to answer. And this answer as proven really difficult to find so far... 😊)

... ⌚ 19 ⬅️ ⬆️ 1 ➡️

36 Deleted
Comment removed by moderator

Deleted Comment 2
(Last 2 picks)

... ⬅️ ⬆️ 1 ⬇️



Into-My-Void · 1d
The Skeptic Scientist

I understand that formalization takes effort, but that's precisely the point. Without it, your framework can't be tested for coherence. You've said your view is internally consistent, but consistency has to be *demonstrated*, not *asserted*.

In moral philosophy, definitions are the structure and semantics determine validity. If your definitions shift mid-argument (as yours repeatedly have), that is the inconsistency. You can't change the meaning of "not killing," "obligation," or "force" between examples and still call the framework consistent.

You're essentially saying: "I'm sure my worldview is consistent, but I can't demonstrate it without years of work." In philosophy, that's just another way of saying: "I believe it's consistent because I want it to be."

The result is what I've observed throughout our exchange:

- You haven't clearly defined your worldview.
- You rely on rhetorical flexibility instead of logical structure.
- You're uncomfortable with philosophical precision.
- You treat this discussion like an emotional tug-of-war rather than a test of logical soundness.

I don't say that as an insult, I'm pointing out the difference between philosophy and rhetoric.

As a scientist (my fields are physics and biology, more precisely studying the effects of radioactivity on DNA) defining things precisely isn't optional, it's foundational. In research, if your terms, hypotheses, and conclusions aren't clearly defined, your paper is worthless. Peer reviewers, especially those for whom English is a second language like myself, depend on precise terminology to evaluate and reproduce results. Clarity isn't a luxury; it's the essence of rigor.

Philosophy works the same way. If you can't clearly define your worldview, premises, and conclusions, then you don't truly understand your own position. You don't have to use standard vocabulary (you can even invent your own terms) but once you define them, they must stay consistent.

For instance, when you used "not killing" in two entirely different senses (one meaning "not acting to cause harm," and another meaning "continuing to sustain life by not interrupting a process") you could have avoided confusion by defining separate terms for each concept. Once definitions are fixed, then we can debate meaning within a shared framework.

So I'll renew the challenge:

Can you clearly state your worldview, its premises, and the conclusions that logically follow, using stable definitions that don't change mid-discussion?

Until that's done, this isn't philosophy. It's rhetoric dressed as philosophy. And rhetoric can be persuasive, but it can't be *consistent* and it doesn't *prove reality*. It only makes the other person stop arguing, not because they're wrong, but because real discussion becomes impossible once definitions start shifting.

I actually find that sad, honestly. You seem intelligent and articulate, but I get

39 logical soundness.

I don't say that as an insult, I'm pointing out the difference between philosophy and rhetoric.

As a scientist (my fields are physics and biology, more precisely studying the effects of radioactivity on DNA) defining things precisely isn't optional, it's foundational. In research, if your terms, hypotheses, and conclusions aren't clearly defined, your paper is worthless. Peer reviewers, especially those for whom English is a second language like myself, depend on precise terminology to evaluate and reproduce results. Clarity isn't a luxury; it's the essence of rigor.

Philosophy works the same way. If you can't clearly define your worldview, premises, and conclusions, then you don't truly understand your own position. You don't have to use standard vocabulary (you can even invent your own terms) but once you define them, they must stay consistent.

For instance, when you used "not killing" in two entirely different senses (one meaning "not acting to cause harm," and another meaning "continuing to sustain life by not interrupting a process") you could have avoided confusion by defining separate terms for each concept. Once definitions are fixed, then we can debate meaning within a shared framework.

So I'll renew the challenge:

Can you clearly state your worldview, its premises, and the conclusions that logically follow, using stable definitions that don't change mid-discussion?

Until that's done, this isn't philosophy. It's rhetoric dressed as philosophy. And rhetoric can be persuasive, but it can't be *consistent* and it doesn't *prove reality*. It only makes the other person stop arguing, not because they're wrong, but because real discussion becomes impossible once definitions start shifting.

I actually find that sad, honestly. You seem intelligent and articulate, but I get the impression you've never really had to test your worldview in a genuine philosophical exchange, one that isn't clouded by rhetorical shortcuts or political reflexes. It's a shame, because that kind of dialogue is where understanding actually begins.

... 12 1 ↻



Into-My-Void • 1d
The Skeptic Scientist

Also, just to clarify one thing: when I said "silence = concession," I didn't mean it as "you'd be admitting defeat" or accepting my worldview.

What I meant was simply that if the discussion stops, I'll interpret it as you choosing to disengage rather than continuing to defend or refine your framework. In long-form debates like this, "ghosting" usually means the argument has reached its endpoint: not that the person agrees, but that they've decided not to carry it further.

I get that it can come off competitive, but that wasn't the intent. I just prefer to make the status of a discussion explicit, because ambiguity tends to create endless half-open loops of "maybe later," which is exhausting for everyone.

You've clearly put time and thought into your system, and I respect that. My goal has always been to understand whether it can be made logically self-consistent, not to score a win.

... 13 1 ↻

> If you ghost this one, I'll count it as you waving the white flag... Silence = Concession.

I hadn't intended on "ghosting this conversation", but I admit that your pre-emptive attempt to declare victory in such a situation seems pretty odd to me.

I've put in considerable amount of time and effort into the discussion. Are we having an intellectual discussion or playing a childish game of "chicken"?

You should know as well as I do, that an incomplete discussion means nothing more than an incomplete discussion. You do not prove your case by simply trying to outlast your correspondent's endurance.

I'm not done with this conversation, but at some point, I will be. At that time, whenever it is, the issues might be unresolved. Life does intervene.

I can't stop you from declaring "victory" when that happens, but I don't think you're going to convince either myself or anyone on this side of the debate on that basis. Heck, there will even be people on your side of the debate who would rightly balk at such a declaration.

Anyway, enough of that. On to the rest of the conversation.

> To make your framework internally consistent, you'd have to fully adopt biological moral realism: a system where morality is not about choice, rights, or consent, but about biological function.

Let's be clear here. My framework is already internally consistent. It produces a rules based system which has consistent outcomes. Those outcomes are consistent with the actual observations I have made based on how human rights actually works in the real world.

The framework you have presented may be consistent, but bears no resemblance to the position I have taken.

Also, your assessment of consequences is deficient. Let's just look at some of them:

> Homosexuality, sterilization, and refusal to reproduce would likewise be condemned as biological non-function.

There are plenty of potentially good reasons that any or all of those situations could be functional.

Homosexuality, for instance, has been put forward as having a potentially positive biological function through the "helper in the nest hypothesis" which is also popularly known as the "gay uncle theory".

Needless to say, this hypothesis also may apply to those who choose specifically to not reproduce as well.

> Autonomy disappears: personal choice has no moral weight; only biological function does.

Even assuming your conditions, autonomy does not disappear. Autonomy would remain functional in all situations where it did not need to defer to a right to life concern.

Loss of autonomy would permit things like rape or assault, which are certainly not biologically necessary functions, and which would contribute to considerable distrust and conflict in advanced human societies.

> This is how your anti-abortion position could remain self-consistent, but only if you admit what it really is: a teleological survival ethic, not an objective rights theory.

> This is how your anti-abortion position could remain self-consistent, but only if you admit what it really is: a teleological survival ethic, not an objective rights theory.

Just to make sure I am clear here, I don't believe my position is a teleological survival ethic. I see no reason to suggest that it is.

I also think you're spending too much time with labels. You aren't attempting to understand my position, you're just trying to label it. I think a discussion of real life examples and consequences would be a better use of your time, assuming you wish for understanding.

Deleted comment 2

> When I presented the “biological moral realism” example, I wasn’t attributing that view to you.

I know that, but you still seem intent on applying some label to what I do believe, such as "objective morality".

I feel those labels are interesting, but too reductive or have too specific meanings for this level of conversation. I am sure that you have specific understanding of what those things mean that I do not.

And that has caused problems with this discussion because I feel like you're trying to fit my responses into boxes with these labels. I make some effort to describe them with labels that may be useful, but I feel that it may have done more harm than good, since what you seem to be pointing to as "inconsistencies" seem more like semantic problems, rather than actual ones.

My goal here is grant an understanding to you of what I believe in regard to human rights. My exploration of it has convinced me that it is consistent and logical. I have taken decades to refine it in my mind, but I have not ever taken much effort to formalize it.

While I agree that being able to provide a neat label and box for what I believe would aid in your understanding of my position, it is not refined to that extent.

For that reason, I would prefer to discuss real world features of the system, rather than view it abstractly. Not because it cannot be done, but because it would require a lot of effort on my part to make sure I am using those terms in the same way you understand them.

> I was not mocking you or misrepresenting your view.

I know this, but at the same time your affect is a little overbearing at times. I suspect this is probably not your intention, but it can be difficult to deal with when trying to make myself clear.

> I’m not trying to “win.” I’m trying to see if a coherent moral defense of total abortion prohibition is even possible.

That conflicts directly with your comment that me "ghosting" you would have represented capitulation. You do seem to have a win vs. lose attitude about this for some reason.